

Applic. No. 09/665,452

Amdt. dated October 28, 2003

Reply to Office action of May 23, 2003

Claim Amendments

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Claim 1 (currently-amended): A method for transferring an article, in particular a nuclear fuel element, the method which comprises:

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providing a fluid-filled first vessel and a fluid-filled second vessel, the interiors of the vessels connected by a connecting element, the connecting element having a first part facing the first vessel and a second part facing the second vessel; and a transport device for moving the article through the connecting element;

maintaining a first fluid flow out of the first vessel into the first part of the connecting element;

maintaining a second fluid flow flowing out of the second vessel in a second part of the connecting element; and

transporting the article through the connecting element with the first and second fluid flows being maintained.

Claim 2 (cancelled)

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Claim 3 (previously-presented): The method according to claim 1, which further comprises:

providing a first opening of the connecting element in the first vessel and a second opening of the connecting element in the second vessel; and

setting an essentially identical static pressure before the first fluid flow and the second fluid flow are generated.

Claim 4 (original): The method according to claim 1, which further comprises:

discharging fluid from the connecting element.

Claim 5 (original): The method according to claim 4, which further comprises:

supplying fluid to one of the vessels with a flow intensity while discharging a fluid with the same flow intensity from the connecting element.

Claim 6 (original): The method according to claim 4, which further comprises:

supplying a fluid to the first vessel at a first flow intensity and to the second vessel with a second flow intensity; and

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discharging the fluid from the connecting element with an extraction flow intensity that corresponds to a sum of the first and the second flow intensities.

Claim 7 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the article is a nuclear fuel element, the first vessel is a reactor pit of a nuclear power station, and the second vessel is a fuel element storage pond of the nuclear power station.

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Claim 8 (withdrawn): An apparatus for transferring an article comprising:

a fluid-filled first vessel and a fluid-filled second vessel, each having an interior;

a connecting element connecting the interiors of said vessels;

a transport device for moving the article through said connecting element; and

an extraction device collecting discharged fluid, said extraction device located on said connecting element.

Claim 9 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said extraction device includes a measuring and regulating device for measuring and setting an extraction flow intensity.

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Claim 10 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 8  
further comprising:

a collecting vessel for receiving the discharged fluid.

Claim 11 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 8,  
wherein the extraction device includes an extraction line  
leading upward as far as an apex point.

*Cont.*  
Claim 12 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 11,  
wherein said apex point is below a fluid level in one of said  
vessels.

Claim 13 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 8,  
further comprising:

a first issue of the connecting element in the first  
vessel; and

a first pressure measuring device for measuring a first  
pressure in the first vessel (10) level with the first issue.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 13,  
further comprising:

a second issue of the connecting element in the second  
vessel; and

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a second pressure measuring device for measuring a second pressure in the second vessel level with the issue of the connecting element.

Claim 15 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising:

an evaluation unit connected to the first pressure measuring device and the second pressure measuring device determining the pressure difference between the first pressure and the second pressure.

Claim 16 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said first vessel is a fuel element storage pond a nuclear power station and said second vessel is a reactor pit of said nuclear power station.

Claim 17 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:

a line conducting the discharged fluid to a preparation plant, in which water contained in said fluid is separated from a boron-containing substance contained in said fluid.

Claim 18 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:

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a first metering valve mounted at a first inflow into aid  
first vessel, through which a predeterminable first fluid flow  
is set.

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Claim 19 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 18,  
further comprising:

a second metering valve mounted at a second inflow into  
the second vessel, through which a predeterminable second  
fluid flow is set.

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